Logoff Remote Desktop Sessions Via Command Line

Monday, June 28, 2010
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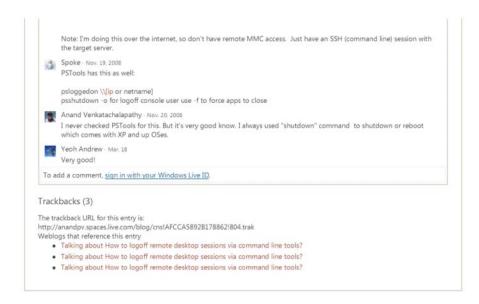
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How to logoff remote desktop sessions via command line tools?

This trick I learned from my one of ex-college. In Windows servers, only two remote desktop sessions allowed with administrative access. There are situations, you can't connect to the server via remote desktop because of two sessions already active. You may have seen this dialog box. ("Remote Desktop Disconnected", "This computer can't connect to the remote computer")

Remote Desktop Disconnected

This computer can't connect to the remote computer.

Try connecting again. If the problem continues, contact the owner of the remote computer or your network administrator.

OK   Help

Usually Windows Administrators, open "Terminal Services Manager" (in Administrative tools), connect to the problematic server and log off the unwanted sessions. There are easy ways if you love command line based tools.

Query the Remote Server for Current Terminal Sessions

To query and list the sessions on the remote session, you could use QUser.exe or QWinsta

1. QUser

QUser command comes with all the latest Windows clients and servers. This will list the sessions of the remote server (or local machine).

NOTE: if you are using Windows XP, you need to add this location into your System path: C:\Windows\System32\DLLCache. To do this, in command prompt, type the following.

SET PATH = %PATH%;C:\Windows\System32\DLLCache;

QUser help shows,

```
C:\Anand>QUser /?
Display information about users logged on to the system.

QUERY USER [username | sessionname | sessionid] [/SERVER:servername]

  username            Identifies the username.
  sessionname         Identifies the session named sessionname.
  sessionid           Identifies the session with ID sessionid.
  /SERVER:servername  The server to be queried (default is current).
```

E.g.,

```
C:\>quser /server:MyCitrixSVR
 USERNAME           SESSIONNAME        ID  STATE   IDLE TIME  LOGON TIME
 johndoe            ica-tcp#966        10  Active       7   7/31/2008 3:04 PM
 averagejoe         ica-tcp#969         1  Active       9   7/31/2008 3:30 PM
 familyman          ica-tcp#984         5  Active    1:06   7/31/2008 4:33 PM
 normaldude         ica-tcp#987         2  Active       4   7/31/2008 6:20 PM
```

2. QWinsta

QWinsta is little different and better. It has more features and options. It comes with all flavors of Windows. QWinsta command line help displays as,

```
C:\>qwinsta /?
Display information about Terminal Sessions.

QUERY SESSION [sessionname | username | sessionid]
              [/SERVER:servername] [/MODE] [/FLOW] [/CONNECT] [/COUNTER]

  sessionname         Identifies the session named sessionname.
  username            Identifies the session with user username.
  sessionid           Identifies the session with ID sessionid.
  /SERVER:servername  The server to be queried (default is current).
  /MODE               Display current line settings.
  /FLOW               Display current flow control settings.
  /CONNECT            Display current connect settings.
```

```
       /COUNTER            Display current Terminal Services counters information.
```

E.g.,

```
C:\>qwinsta /server:citrixserver
SESSIONNAME        USERNAME              ID  STATE    TYPE        DEVICE
                                          0  Disc     rdpwd
ica-tcp                                65536  Listen   wdica
rdp-tcp                                65537  Listen   rdpwd
console                                   16  Conn     wdcon
ica-tcp#966        johndoe               10  Active   wdica
ica-tcp#969        apple                  1  Active   wdica
ica-tcp#984        averagejoe             5  Active   wdica
ica-tcp#987        familyman              2  Active   wdica
ica-tcp#989        whoisme                3  Active   wdica
```

You are welcome to try the other options QWinsta provides.

Logoff the Remote Sessions

To Log off the terminal session of the remote server, you can use any one of two command line tools. One of LOGOFF and another one is RWINSTA. Before you log off the remote session, you should know the "Session ID" which you get it from "QUSER" OR "QWINSTA" commands as above stated.

1. Logoff

Logoff command kicks off (logging off) the specified remote session. Log off help shows,

```
C:\>logoff /?
Terminates a session.

LOGOFF [sessionname | sessionid] [/SERVER:servername] [/V]

    sessionname            The name of the session.
    sessionid              The ID of the session.
    /SERVER:servername     Specifies the Terminal server containing the user
                           session to log off (default is current).
    /V                     Displays information about the actions performed.
```

E.g.,

```
C:\>logoff /server:infra-apps 1 /v
Logging off session ID 1
```

2. RWinsta

RWinsta has same parameters and does same thing as log off command. It simply means **Reset WIN**dows **STA**tion. The help goes as,

```
C:\>RWinsta /?
Reset the session subsytem hardware and software to known initial values.

RESET SESSION {sessionname | sessionid} [/SERVER:servername] [/V]

    sessionname            Identifies the session with name sessionname.
    sessionid              Identifies the session with ID sessionid.
    /SERVER:servername     The server containing the session (default is current).
    /V                     Display additional information.
```

E.g.,

```
C:\>RWinsta /Server:MyWinServer 1
```

Note: RWinsta command does not return anything.

Happy Re-setting the remote sessions (Hey, stop cursing your co-workers who didn't log off their sessions).

Keywords: Reset remote session, Remote Desktop Session

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P G - Oct. 27, 2008
Good post.

I guess the above commands would logoff and kill existing processes and a login will give you a fresh instance.

Is there a way similar to Task manager -> Users -> Disconnect where you can disconnect / take control of an existing remote desktop session without killing the programs currently executing?

Note: I'm doing this over the internet, so don't have remote MMC access. Just have an SSH (command line) session with the target server.

Spoke · Nov. 19, 2008
PSTools has this as well:

psloggedon \\[ip or netname]
psshutdown -o for logoff console user use -f to force apps to close

Anand Venkatachalapathy · Nov. 20, 2008
I never checked PSTools for this. But it's very good know. I always used "shutdown" command to shutdown or reboot which comes with XP and up OSes.

Yeoh Andrew · Mar. 18
Very good!

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